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The Beaver Monument

.. IN ..

The Churchyard of Wokingham Parish Church.

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BY THE

Rev. B. LONG,

Rector of Wokingham.

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1928.

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The Beaver Monument in Wokingham Churchyard.

1696719

By The Rev. B. Long, Rector of Wokingham.

NEAR the West gate of the Parish Church of Wokingham there stands a large oblong monument of Portland stone, raised on stone steps. The main portion is composed of two tiers, the upper being smaller than the lower. The lower part contains a closely-cut inscription on all four sides. The upper part bears an inscription on the West side and two lines only at the bottom of the North side. These lines are clearly only the ending of a portion which has at some time been erased, and there are grounds for thinking that inscriptions have been effaced on the other sides.

The inscription, which contains some 4,000 letters, is a record of members of the Beaver family of Wokingham from the time of King Charles I. until the latter part of the Eighteenth Century, together with references to other families with whom they were connected by marriage. In all about sixty-one persons are mentioned. The only dates given throughout are a reference to the first Battle of Newbury in 1643; and to the drowning of a Thomas Leach in 1761. In most cases, however, the ages of the members of the family are given, and these, together with information obtained from the Parish Church Registers, enable the pedigree to be reconstructed.

Various incidents of interest are mentioned. The outstanding figure is Richard Beaver of Wokingham. He raised a Troop of Horse for King Charles and maintained it at his own expense. He served in the wars with Sir Richard Harison of Hurst, Algernon Simes of the Little Park, Windsor, Alexander Taughton of the Great Park, Windsor, and Lord Thomas Howard, Earl of Berkshire (a son of the Duke of Norfolk). With all these he was connected by marriage, as also with Sir Henry Winchcombe of Bucklebury, a descendant of the celebrated "Jack of Newbury." They shared in the misfortunes of their King, and most of them suffered the loss of their estates.

The inscription on the North, East, and South sides was recut, in portions at a time, between the years 1883 and 1893. The Parish Magazine states that the lettering was at this time indistinct, but that the old was not effaced before recutting. There are, however, very considerable variations between the present wording and that given in the article on Wokingham in the Wiltshire Archæological Magazine of November, 1867. This article was mainly prepared by F. A. Carrington, Recorder of Wokingham, and published after his death. He received in 1860 a copy of the inscription from the Rev. J. B. Deane, Rector of St. Martin Outwich, Bishopsgate Street, and reproduced it verbatim in the Wilts Magazine. There is no evidence to show the date when the copy was made. There are indications that the copyist did not aim at precise accuracy, which would account for the many variations. Otherwise it would be difficult to avoid the conclusion that at some time after the copy was made, the inscription was effaced and recut. If this were so, it must have been at a date long enough before 1883 for the lettering to have become indistinct. The stone is soft, and thirty to forty years might be sufficient to produce this result. Any erasure on the three upper slabs would appear to have been previous to the time when the copy was made, as Carrington makes no reference to any inscription on them. On the whole the presumption is that the main inscription has not been erased at any time.

There certainly seems to be an error in one name given by Carrington. At the end of the first line on the South side he gives "and of Rachel his wife, daughter of *Richard Deane* of . . . ." At the present time there is a vacant space after the words "daughter of," in which it would be just possible to include the words "Rd Dean of." (The Christian names are nearly always abbreviated.) But in order to accept this we should have to believe that his great great grand-daughter, Ann Beaver, was married to his son, Henry Dean, or else the improbable hypothesis that two separate persons are referred to as "Rd Dean of this Town," and that, later on, the phrase "the aforesaid Rd Dean of this Town" is used without distinguishing between

them. It is probable that the words were indistinct when the earlier copy was made, and that the copyist conjectured "Rd Deane," as that name appeared later on. The correct name is not of importance, except as giving the name of the maternal grandfather of a prominent personage, the Richard Beaver of Charles I. time.

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Date of the Monument.

The writer has come to the conclusion that the date of the inscription is 1785 or a few years later. In Carrington's article in the Wiltshire Archæological Magazine there is a footnote: "There seems to be no dates of years;* but the epitaph was probably written about 1740"; and this opinion has been frequently repeated since. A careful comparison of the inscription with information obtained from the Parish Church Registers points to a later date. Two grounds for this statement may be sufficient.

1. The inscription contains a reference to the death of William Beaver at the age of 61 years, and of a Mary Beaver at the age of 87 years. William was baptized January 22, 1724, which places his death in 1784-5. Mary was baptized February 24, 1687, married to John North on May 1, 1709, and buried October 16, 1774.

2. The inscription on the West side refers to the death, in her 61st year, of Elizabeth, wife of Benjamin Beaver, and to the death by drowning of their *nephew*, Thomas Leach, on July 14, 17—, while swimming in the River Thames near Caversham Lock. This would indicate that either a sister of Benjamin Beaver married a Leach, or that his wife's maiden name was Leach. The latter is supported by the Registers. A Benjamin Beaver married an Elizabeth Leach on May 24, 1764, and Elizabeth Leach was baptized August 12, 1724. This would bring her death, in her 61st year, to about 1784-85. There is no entry of the burial of an Elizabeth Beaver at that time; there are entries under June 12 and August 18, 1775, either of which would accord, if there had been an error at any time in deciphering and "61st year" should be "51st year."

* This statement is not strictly accurate, as there are the two dates mentioned at the beginning of this article.

In 1907, the third figure of the year in which Thomas Leach was drowned was not clear, but might have been a " 6 " ; the last figure was lost. There is an entry in the Registers of the burial of Thomas Leach on July 17, 1761. This, taken in conjunction with the facts that the drowning of the nephew was on July 14, and that Elizabeth Beaver's maiden name was Leach, seems to be conclusive evidence that the date on the monument should be 1761 ; and accordingly this date was supplied when the West side was recut in 1907.

In the inscription Benjamin Beaver is not mentioned except as being the husband of Elizabeth Beaver. There are entries in the Register of the baptisms of a Benjamin Beaver, son of William and Elizabeth Beaver, on September 26, 1727, and of burials of Benjamin Beaver on February 23, 1789, and January 2, 1791.

There is strong presumptive evidence that the monument was erected by this Benjamin Beaver,† and the points mentioned above would show that it was subsequent to the death of his wife in 1784-5 (and that of his brother William in 1785), and previous to his own death in 1789 or 1791. This is further supported by the fact that the inscription mentions the deaths of three sons of William and Elizabeth Beaver, specifically referring to them as the first, second and fourth sons, but omits any reference to that of Benjamin who, by the Register, was the third son.

It is possible to conjecture that the inscription is not all of the same date, and that later additions have been made ; and internal evidence might suggest that the latter part (on the North side) is of a different style from the foregoing. But a careful study of dates derived from the Registers shows that the other portions, which are of the same style, and are closely connected together, could not be very many years earlier than the date suggested above.

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† The use of the word " friend " (on the lower slab on the West side) might suggest that it was not the husband, but there are several grounds for thinking that Benjamin Beaver did not wish to bring himself forward ; and also, in view of the literary standard of epitaphs of the time, the need of a monosyllabic word for the metre might be quite sufficient to account for the use of the word.

THE INSCRIPTION, AS IT NOW APPEARS (1928).

WEST SIDE. UPPER SLAB.

Erected for a Lafting Remembrance
of one of the Beft of women (& *might*‡
Boaft of Kindred *or Greatness*) who
Deferved more than I can Say of her
And for whofe Sake I have engaged
part of my Eftate to Keep up
This Monument in repair to the
End of Time.

LOWER SLAB.

Beneath this Stone lyeth the mortal part
Of Her who once delighted every Heart
How Good She was and what her virtues were
Her Guardian Angel can alone declare
The friend that now this little tribute pays
Too exquifitely feels to fpeak Her praife
The fweet remembrance of a Wife fo juft
Affords him comfort though She fleeps in duft
Eliz^th Wife of Benjn Beaver
In the 61st year of Her Age.
Stop Youth
Take warning for here lyeth alfo the
remains of their beloved Nephew
Thos. Leach who was loft July 14th 1761
in fwimming in the River Thames near
Caverfham Lock to the great forrow of
all who knew Him in the 16th Year of His Age.

SOUTH SIDE. LOWER SLAB.

And of Thos^s Beaver, late of Binfield Efq^r And Rachel, his Wife Daughter of . . . . . .
this Town Gen^t And of their Second Son Thos Aged 34. And of Mary his Wife Sifter to
Staverton of this Parifh Esqr Aged 39. And of their Firft Son R^d who Married Mary

‡ When recut in 1907 the words appeared to be as those in italics, but as there was some uncertainty, they were not inserted.

Daughter of S^ir^ R^d^ Harifon, of Whiftley & Hinton, in the Parifh of Hurft & Sifter to the

then S^ir^ R^d^ Harifon of Hurft. fhe died Aged 77 the faid R^d^ her Hufband died Aged 79

and here buried in Peace after Jointly with their Brother raifed Three Troops of

Horfe for King Charles the Firft, & maintained them Years at their own expense : Viz.

Two Troops at S^ir^ R^d^ & one at the Said R^d^ Beavers. They ferved with Algernon Simes,

(who was flain at the firft Fight at Newbury 20th Septr 1643 as were Lord Spencer

& S^ir^ Robt Dormon Bar^t^) of the little Park Windfor. Efq^r^ And with Alexander

Taughton of the great Park Windfor, (under the Earl of Crawford till he was taken

& fent Prifoner to the Tower, where he lay'd Nine Years) And afterwards they

ferv'd under their Brother Lord Thos Howard, Earl of Berkfhire, Son of the Duke

of Norfolk by his Majefty's appointment : the faid Earl as well as the faid R^d^ Beaver

married a Sifter of the faid S^ir^ R^d^ Harifon, by whom he left Two Daughters the eldeft

married S^ir^ Henry Winchcombe of Bucklebury, in this County, Bart And the other

Daughter married a Son of S^ir^ Thos Parker. And S^ir^ R^d^ Harifon married Dorothy, the

only Daughter & Heirefs of Wm Dean, of Nethercot in Oxfordshire, Efq^r^ Niece to S^ir^

James Dean, of Bafingftoke, & to R^d^ Dean, of this Town, Gen^t^ (the Two midle-fingers on her

left Hand grew together) They ferved together in the Civil wars, fuffered the Perfecution

of Sequeftration, Compofition &c : And of R^d^ Beaver, Son of the aforefaid R^d^ & Mary Aged 49.

EAST SIDE. LOWER SLAB.

and of Mary his Wife aged 80 who
before marriage was Mary Taylor late of
Binfield but then of this Town. And of
W^{m} their Son aged 81, And of Mary his
Wife, aged 46, fhe was Daughter &
Heir to the faid Alexander Taughton Esq
by Mary his Wife who was fole Daughter
& Heir of the faid Algernon Simes by
§[L]ovife his Wife, Daughter of S^{ir} W^{m}
[Kippe]x of Bewcot Berks Bart. And of W^{m}
[fo]n of the faid W^{m} & Mary aged 66. He
[w]as Heir to the faid Alexander's Widow &
to the Widow Bowlen the other Daughter
to the faid Alexander : her Husband Thos
Bowlen was a Coal Merchant & greatly
reduced by ferving the Court, for he loft
his Debt of Thousands by the unfortunate
King being deftroyed. The Estates of the
faid Algernon Alexander & R^{d} were
fpent feifed & fo loft (Part now is a part
of the great Park Simes Farm

NORTH SIDE. LOWER SLAB.

Pinnell Warren & Shrubs Hill near Virginia Water) To the lofs of the laft mentioned

Wm Beaver And of Elizth his Wife Aged 69 fhe was the eldeft Daughter of Henry

Dean (who was Son of the aforefaid R^{d} Dean) of this Town by his Wife Marg^{t} who

was Sifter to Gennoway, of St Dunftans London Silk Mercer. And of Henry Second

Son of the late W^{m} & Elizth Aged 36 And of John their Fourth Son Aged 19. And of

W^{m} their Firft Son Aged 61. And of three, of their Daughters who died in their Infancy

---

§ Letters in square brackets are chipped off, but taken from a copy of an earlier photograph.

And of the aforefaid Marg^{t} Dean Aged 86.|| And of the aforefaid Henry Dean in the
85 Year of his Age. He changed this Life for a better, he was greatly reduced by lending
his Subftance to John Hawes of this Parifh, Brewer, which he loft fo that he kept a Publick
Houfe for his living Four or Five Years, & afterwards by King James Civil Wars more
reduced having then nothing left but a Tenement of Three Pounds a Year. he was
obliged to earn his living from the Age of Fifty Years (not being ufed to work)
for above Thirty Years more till near his end by Gardening He was Patient,
Healthy, of a Chearful & honeft Heart. And of Ann his Second Wife Aged 81. She
was Sifter to the Wm Beaver that married mary Taughton aforesaid. And of Thos
their Brother Aged 84. And of Rachel his Wife Aged 85. And of Mary their
Daughter Aged 87. And of Ben^{n} Hawkins Aged 26. he married Elizth eldeft Daughter
of the laft mentioned W^{m} & Elizth Beaver. Benjn Beaver Hawkins at the Age of 8 was Buried
in the midle Ifle of this Church. As was alfo Alf¶ Simon Weaver Aged 76. Nephew of the firft
mentioned Thos & Rachel Beaver. Let this deter others leaft they ruin themfelves &
their Family as Algernon Alexander & the faid R^{d} did theirs. Here you fee a pattern worthy of imatation.
(sic)

UPPER SLAB (AT THE BOTTOM).

Untill the Tafk of Bufy Life is done. Then reft my weary bones beneath this Stone
And wait his voice to Raife me from the Duft Who gave Salvation unto all that Truft.

|| Clearly this should be 36, as given by Carrington, and as required by dates (in Register) for second marriage of her husband.

¶ An error for "Mr."

R FAMILY

d of Wokingham

l from the Parish Reg

....

Thos. Beave

n (77)=Richard Beaver (79)
1714 1st son
Bur. July 7, 1675[3]

ard Beaver (49)=Mary Tayl
late of Bin
of Wokingh
? Bur. Apr.

81) Thomas Beav
Bur. May 7 1743
23, 1755 =Rachel (85) *Wh*
M. July 21, 16
? Bur. Jan. 30, 1

Mary Beaver (
M.
Bap. Feb. 24, 1
Bur. Oct. 16, 1

9)=William Beaver (66)

b. 13, 1723
Bap. Feb. 3, 1692
Bur. Dec. 1, 1758

Henry (36[10])
2nd son
4

J
Bap.

Benjamin[11] =
M. Ma
Bap. Sep. 26, 1727
? Bur. Feb. 23, 1789
or Jan. 2, 1791

as now cut,

Carrington's
re-cut.

And of the aforefaid Marg^{t} Dean Aged 86.|| And of the aforefaid Henry Dean in the
85 Year of his Age. He changed this Life for a better, he was greatly reduced by lending
his Subftance to John Hawes of this Parifh, Brewer, which he loft fo that he kept a Publick
Houfe for his living Four or Five Years, & afterwards by King James Civil Wars more
reduced having then nothing left but a Tenement of Three Pounds a Year. he was
obliged to earn his living from the Age of Fifty Years (not being ufed to work)
for above Thirty Years more till near his end by Gardening He was Patient,
Healthy, of a Chearful & honeft Heart. And of Ann his Second Wife Aged 81. She
was Sifter to the Wm Beaver that married mary Taughton aforesaid. And of Thos
their Brother Aged 84. And of Rachel his Wife Aged 85. And of Mary their
Daughter Aged 87. And of Ben^{n} Hawkins Aged 26. he married Elizth eldeft Daughter
of the laft mentioned W^{m} & Elizth Beaver. Benjn Beaver Hawkins at the Age of 8 was Buried
in the midle Ifle of this Church. As was alfo Alf¶ Simon Weaver Aged 76. Nephew of the firft
mentioned Thos & Rachel Beaver. Let this deter others leaft they ruin themfelves &
their Family as Algernon Alexander & the faid R^{d} did theirs. Here you fee a pattern worthy of imatation.
(sic)

UPPER SLAB (AT THE BOTTOM).

Untill the Tafk of Bufy Life is done. Then reft my weary bones beneath this Stone
And wait his voice to Raife me from the Duft Who gave Salvation unto all that Truft.

|| Clearly this should be 36, as given by Carrington, and as required by dates (in Register) for second marriage of her husband.

¶ An error for "Mr."

PEDIGREE OF BEAVER FAMILY

referred to on the Beaver Monument in the Churchyard of Wokingham Parish Church.

The Portions printed in Roman Type are taken from the Inscription; those in Italics are derived from the Parish Registers or other sources as indicated in the notes.

Duke of Norfolk

Sir Richard Harison of Whistley & Hinton in the Parish of Hurst

Sir James Dean of Basingstoke

Wm. Dean of Nethercott in Oxfordshire, Esq.

Richard Dean of Wokingham, Gent.

Sir Thos. Parker

Lord Thos. Howard=Daughter
Earl of Berkshire

Son=Daughter

Daughter (eldest)=Sir Henry Winchcombe Bart.
of Bucklebury, Berks
Died 1703[4]

Frances[5]=*Henry Lord Bolingbroke*
No issue

Sir Richard Harison=Dorothy Dean
of Hurst (only daughter)
[2] *Born c. 1611*
M. c. 1634
Died Aug. 23, 1683

Gennoway,
of St. Dunstan's. London,
Silk Mercer

(1) Margaret (*Grenaway*[6]) (36[7])=Henry Dean (85)=(2) Ann (81)
M. Sep. 3, 1692
Bur. Dec. 21, 1699
Bur. Apr. 17, 1746
M. Apr. 27. 1701
Bur. July 23, 1755

Mary Harison (77)=Richard Beaver (79)
? Bur. Sep. 29, 1714
1st son
Bur. July 7, 1675[3]

Richard Beaver (49)=Mary Taylor (80)
late of Binfield, then
of Wokingham
? Bur. Apr. 6, 1722

Thos. Beaver Esq.=Rachel

.....of this Town Gent.

.....*Weaver*

Simon Weaver (76)[1]
Nephew of Thos. and Rachel Weaver
Died Nov. 25, 1699

Thos Beaver (34)
2nd son
=Mary (39), sister of
Staverton of Wokm., Esq.

Thomas Beaver
Bur. May 7 1743 Aged 82
=Rachel (85) *Wheatley*
M. July 21, 1686
? Bur. Jan. 30, 1748

Mary Beaver (87)=*John North*
M. May 1, 1709
Bap. Feb. 24, 1687
Bur. Oct. 16, 1774

William Beaver (81)=Mary Taughton (46)
M. Oct. 26, 1691
Bur. July 25, 1755
? Bur. Sep. 29, 1714

7 other children

Sir Wm. Kippax
of Bewcot, Berks,
Bart,

Algernon Simes Esq.=Louise
of the Little Park,
Windsor

Alexander Taughton Esq.=Mary
of the Great Park, Windsor (only daughter)

Wid. Bowlen
=Thos. Bowlen
(Coal Merchant)

Elizabeth Dean (69)=William Beaver (66)
(eldest daughter)
M. Feb. 13, 1723
Bap. May 24, 1695
Bur. Apr. 11, 1763
"From Marlow."
Bap. Feb. 3, 1692
Bur. Dec. 1, 1758

Benjamin Hawkins (26[8] (?))=Elizabeth Beaver
Bap March 6. 1731
Bur. Feb. 8, 1755
(eldest daughter)
Bap. March 16, 1731

Benjamin Beaver Hawkins (8)
Bur. July 29, 1763
"From Marlow."

William (61[9])
1st son
Bap. Jan. 22, 1724

Henry (36[10])
2nd son

John (19)
4th son
Bap. Jan. 31, 1729

Three daughters
(died in infancy)

Thomas & Elizabeth Leach

Benjamin[11]=Elizabeth (61) *Leach*
M. May 24, 1764
Bap. Sep. 26, 1727
? Bur. Feb. 23, 1789
or Jan. 2, 1791
Bap. Aug. 12, 1724

.....*Leach.*

Thomas Leach (15) Nephew of
Benjamin and Elizabeth Beaver
Bur. July 17, 1761

1. A Memorial Slab in the Parish Church shows that Simon Weaver was a "Citizen and Cutler of London, born in this Parish," and the Register describes him as "of St. Clements Dancs."
2. Derived from the Monument to Sir Richard Harison in Hurst Church.
3. The Burial date, July 7, 1675, might apply to either the father or the son. They would have died within a few years of one another. As the Inscription states that the father was "here buried," it has been applied to him.

4 and 5. See Lysons Magna Britannia, p. 253.

6. The Marriage Register gives "Grenaway." The Inscription, as now cut, gives the brother's name as "Gennoway."
7. The age, as now cut, is 86. It should clearly be 36, as given in Carrington's Article, and in another copy made in 1892, before it was re-cut.
8. The second figure was doubtful in 1892.

9 and 10. The 1892 copy gives 51 and 58 respectively.

11. The Inscription does not state that Benjamin was a son of William and Elizabeth Beaver, but the Register indicates it.

The John Hawes mentioned in the Inscription may have been buried on June 6, 1712, or on June 22, 1718.

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